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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of
Worthington, et al.
Application No. 09/643,106
Filing Date: 21 August, 2000
Attorney Docket No. 18950-30

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DECISION

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This is a decision on the petition filed on 12 August, 2004, alleging unintentional delay under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).

For the reasons set forth below, the petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **DISMISSED**.

NOTES:

- (1) Any petition (and fee) for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within two (2) months from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b)."
- (2) Thereafter, there will be no further reconsideration of this matter.
- (3) The petition contained no mailing address, and it is clear from the petition contents/supporting materials that the address of record may no longer be valid. A

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copy of this decision is being sent to addresses (a) of record for the Petitioner and (b) provided by Petitioner's office. Moreover, it also appears that there is no indication that Petitioner herein was ever empowered to prosecute the instant application. If Petitioner desires to receive future correspondence regarding this application, the appropriate power of attorney documentation must be submitted. A courtesy copy of this decision will be mailed to Petitioner. However, all future correspondence will be directed to the address of record until such time as appropriate instructions are received to the contrary.

BACKGROUND

The record reflects that:

- Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly to the Notice of Allowance and Fees Due mailed on 2 October, 2003, with reply (fees) due absent extension of time on or before 2 January, 2004;
- the application went abandoned after midnight 2 January, 2004;
- the Office mailed the Notice of Abandonment on 10 February, 2004;
- Petitioner filed the instant petition (with fee), the Issue Fee (small entity)—the Notice of Allowance contains no indication that a publication fee is due—as the reply, and, for reasons unexplained Petitioner also paid a \$65.00 surcharge, however, in lieu of a statement of unintentional delay, Petitioner includes not only his statement but that of Richard Burstein, CEO of the former and now partial assignee, and that statement is unclear as to the unintentional nature of the delay herein.

Petitioner is cautioned always to check the Office website (www.uspto.gov) for the current fees before filing, and to use Office forms for petitions where appropriate.

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).¹

¹ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority. The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.²

Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.³ Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).⁴ And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.⁵ Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care. (By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁶))

The requirements for a grantable petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee, the statement of unintentional delay (a further showing may be required), a proper reply, and—where appropriate—a terminal disclaimer and fee.

Petitioner has failed to satisfy the statement requirement of the regulation. **The statement of unintentional delay must be clear and unambiguous.**

CONCLUSION

The instant petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) hereby is **dismissed**.

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

² Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.

³ See: *Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice*, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

⁴ See: In re Application of G, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

⁵ See: Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office *supra*.


⁶ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

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Telephone inquiries concerning this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214.



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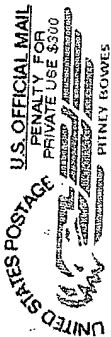
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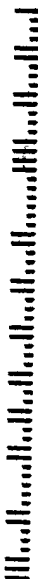
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